

Pratt Center's Taconic Fellowship: A Decade of Community- Engaged Projects



Center's



Fellowship:



A Decade of



Community-



Engaged

Projects



60 years of

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For more information, please contact
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Pratt Center wishes to thank Pratt Institute's Creative Services team for designing this report. We also want to acknowledge all former and current Taconic fellows, with a special thanks to Gita Nandan, Elliott Maltby, Hannah Berkin-Harper, Cynthia Tobar, and Raymond Figueroa for participating in interviews about their projects that were highlighted in this report. Pratt Center staff who contributed to the report were Paula Crespo, Amelia Brod, Kayla Shifter, Chante Ramsey, and Alexa Kasdan.

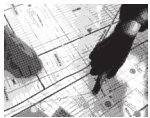
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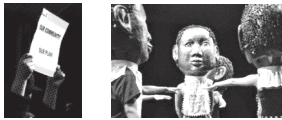


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Background

Opposite: *Piloting Innovative Community Engagement Tools for Two Bridges* (2019–2020). Meta Brunzema, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design + Students Justin Heu and Khue Trinh, Architecture

Introduction

The Taconic Fellowship is a grantmaking program operated by the Pratt Center for Community Development and targeted exclusively to Pratt faculty, staff, and students. Each academic year since 2013, Pratt Center awards five to ten projects up to \$12,000 for work that aligns with Pratt Center’s mission to advance racial, climate, and economic justice in New York City. The goal of the fellowship is to leverage the wealth of academic resources at Pratt Institute to benefit New York City communities by facilitating “beyond the gates” projects involving faculty and students working on behalf of real world communities. Ultimately, this fellowship advances Pratt Institute’s commitment to civic engagement and service learning.

As Pratt Center celebrates our 60th anniversary, we are taking this opportunity to reflect on and share important lessons we’ve learned through the Taconic Fellowship over the years. We are writing this report to share the Taconic Fellowship model of community and academic partnerships as a way to deepen community engagement in New York City and offer expanded resources to low-income BIPOC communities. This report also documents and honors the collaborative partnerships that the Taconic Fellowship has supported between Pratt faculty, students, and mission-driven community-based organizations. It illustrates the diversity of projects in terms of topics they addressed, populations that were engaged, and methods and approaches used to engage them.



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COIN

Community Engagement as a Pillar

A key tenet of any Taconic-funded project is community engagement, working in close partnership with communities that have been historically and systematically excluded from decision-making to design opportunities to meaningfully participate in processes that impact their lives. Community engagement often involves outreach, bringing together and facilitating discussions, and information-gathering with groups of stakeholders. A variety of techniques can be employed when working with communities, and this report breaks down all of the projects into these categories: co-design/participatory planning, participatory research, interviews, storytelling, and workshops.

Good community engagement often involves relationships with community-based organizations, particularly those with deep community roots, who can authentically represent the community on various issues. Since its inception, Pratt Center has always collaborated with community partners on the ground to help them advance their goals around equitable urban planning and policy. See below for a set of questions we ask ourselves when evaluating a potential community partnership. Taconic projects are also required to partner with a community-based organization and to employ collaborative design, decision-making, and implementation processes.

Pratt Center's Evolving Framework for Considering New or Emerging Community Engagement Partnerships

- Is the engagement with historically marginalized populations, and centering BIPOC communities?
- Is the engagement with people who genuinely represent the community (geographic or of affinity)?
- Is the request community-generated with a clear and viable community partner who's building power and/or has deep roots in the community?
- Is there one or more clear community partner(s) that have the ability to actively participate in the project?
- Is it likely to have an impact on structural/systemic change and/or advancing racial, economic, and climate justice?

Supporting Pratt Institute's Commitment to Civic Engagement

Over the last decade, the Taconic Fellowship has supported faculty and students from across Pratt Institute's departments as they collaborate with community partners to address significant societal issues, from alternative justice to mental health to food access and climate change. The communities served by these projects have varied, from affinity groups (e.g., youth, LGBTQI) to particular New York City neighborhoods. The diversity of projects to date showcases the breadth of ways that the Pratt community extends beyond the academic gates, and they serve as inspiration for the Institute's continued commitment to this critical endeavor.

The Taconic Fellowship is making an impact at Pratt and beyond. In many cases the funding associated with it has created opportunities for faculty to percolate an idea that may have come up in a class, allowing them to earmark time to examine questions that come up more carefully. The fellowship has also helped create opportunities for design-related projects for community organizations that often cannot afford such services.

Where We Go from Here

The purpose of this report is to celebrate over a decade's worth of community-based projects that the Taconic Fellowship program has supported. As we look back on and recognize the work that has been carried out to date, Pratt Center looks forward to the future of the program and how it will support collaborations with community partner organizations across the city. Given the ongoing urgency to tackle racial, economic, and climate inequities in a way that meaningfully engages affected communities, we see the Taconic Fellowship program moving even more intentionally in that direction. Part of this will be facilitating learning and information exchange sessions for Taconic fellows to learn from each other and create a community of practice for community-engaged work. Ultimately, Pratt Center is excited about continuing to concretely advance Pratt Institute's civic engagement goals.

"It [Taconic Fellowship] has created opportunities for faculty to percolate an idea that may have come up in class, allowing them to earmark time to examine questions that come up more carefully."

— Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE



Taconic Projects by the Numbers

70

Total Number
of Projects

106

Total Number
of Faculty/
Staff Fellows

109

Total Number
of Student
Fellows

29

Total Number of Geographies Served:

- Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn (7)
- Brooklyn (9)
- Brooklyn and Queens waterfront
- Bushwick, Brooklyn (2)
- Central Brooklyn (2)
- Chinatown, Manhattan
- Citywide (10)
- Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn (7)
- Corona, Queens
- East Harlem, Manhattan (2)
- East New York, Brooklyn (2)
- Flatbush, Brooklyn
- Flushing, Queens
- Fresh Meadows, Queens
- Gowanus, Brooklyn
- Jackson Heights, Queens
- Kingsbridge Heights, Bronx
- Lower East Side, Manhattan (2)
- Manhattan
- North Brooklyn (2)
- Park Slope, Brooklyn
- Red Hook, Brooklyn (4)
- Riis Beach, Queens
- Rockaways, Queens
- Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn
- South Bronx (3)
- Sunset Park, Brooklyn
- Washington Heights, Manhattan
- Weeksville, Brooklyn

Opposite: *Chipping
Away at Poverty
Through Community
Design: A Collaborative
Program for Com-
posting in Park Slope
(2016–2017).*



Jennifer E. Telesca,
Assistant Professor,
Social Science and
Cultural Studies +
Student: Megan Lighty,
Industrial Design







Projects: Diversity and Recurring Themes

Taconic Fellows by Pratt Departments¹

- Art and Design Education
- Communication Design (undergraduate and graduate)
- Construction Management, Facilities Management, and Real Estate Practice
- Continuing and Professional Studies
- Creative Enterprise Leadership
- Digital Arts and Animation
- Fashion Design
- Film and Video
- Fine Arts
- GCPE (Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment)
- Graduate Architecture and Urban Design
- History of Art and Design
- Interior Design
- Photography

Topics Covered

-  Community-based planning/development
-  Environmental/climate justice
-  Equitable economic/workforce development
-  Food access/food waste
-  Gender-based violence
-  Gentrification and community change






-  Immigration
 -  Incarceration
 -  Personal and neighborhood history
 -  Public space
 -  Sustainability/resiliency
 -  Youth education/development
-

Participating Communities²

- BIPOC³
 - Immigrants
 - LGBTQI⁴
 - Low-income residents with mental or chronic health issues
 - Public housing residents
 - Seniors
 - Small business owners
 - Street vendors
 - Survivors of domestic violence
 - Women
 - Young men with justice system involvement
-

Methods, Approaches, and Tools Employed

Taconic project teams employ a variety of engagement techniques when working with communities:

-  Co-design/participatory planning
-  Participatory research
-  Interviews
-  Storytelling
-  Workshops

¹ Many project teams were multidisciplinary/multi-departmental.

² We recognize that this list is incomplete and that all communities hold intersecting and expansive identities.

³ Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color

⁴ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex

Project Spotlights



Young people tending to a community garden.
Photo courtesy of Ray Figueroa.

Designing Community Gardens as Critical Environmental Areas (2017–2018)

Community partner:
Nos Quedamos

Project Team:
Raymond Figueroa, Visiting Instructor,
GCPE + Samuel Pressman, MS
Sustainable Environmental Systems '20

New York City's 500-plus community gardens are concentrated in low-income communities of color—a positive legacy of the pre-gentrification era when many neighborhoods were strewn with vacant lots. In addition to the cultivation of much-needed fresh food, these environmental and social assets deliver an array of green infrastructure benefits such as rainwater harvesting and diversion of stormwater runoff. These are increasingly important functions as climate change intensifies and the city experiences more frequent extreme weather. Community gardens also create open spaces for educational, social, and cultural programming in

under-resourced neighborhoods where they're in short supply.

Critical Environmental Areas Designation as Protection from Development

Despite all the critical roles they play, gardens that aren't protected by being on city parkland or by the backing of well-financed nonprofits are vulnerable to development. As an active community gardener in the South Bronx, the precarious nature of community gardens greatly troubled Raymond Figueroa (Visiting Instructor in Sustainable Environmental Systems at the Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment) and led him to begin exploring policy options to improve their land tenure status. He landed on the concept of defining community gardens as "Critical Environmental Areas" (CEA), a New York State designation that has been typically applied to rural and/or natural areas outside of New York City. CEA designation would ensure that public officials consider the possible harmful effects of development and construction when reviewing proposals for an existing garden site or on an adjoining lot. Ultimately, it would make community gardens less vulnerable in the face of new development, particularly for neighborhoods that continue to experience gentrification.

From Research to Legislation

To make the case that community gardens met the criteria for CEA designation, Figueroa and graduate student Samuel Pressman, MS Sustainable Environmental Systems '20, collaborated with We Stay/Nos Quedamos, a local nonprofit that advocates for equitable development that improves the health and well-being of residents in the community garden-rich Melrose neighborhood. Their strong support of

community gardens and experience in organizing made them a natural partner for Figueroa. The team collected oral histories of community gardeners from across the city and gathered data to quantify the environmental benefits, like flood control, temperature regulation, and food production. Once this data was synthesized, Figueroa approached the public interest law firm Earthjustice, and together with We Stay/Nos Quedamos they embarked on a statewide campaign to achieve the designation. After almost four years of advocacy and organizing, the New York State Senate and Assembly voted to facilitate the designation of community gardens as CEAs last year.

lowlands (2014–2015)

Community partner:

Red Hook Initiative

Project Team:

Elliott Maltby and Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professors, GCPE + Chris Rice and Acacia Dupierre, MS City and Regional Planning '15

Years before the Black Lives Matter movement opened up many people's eyes to the realities of unfair policing practices in relationship to public space, a group of Red Hook youth were having conversations with GCPE faculty Gita Nandan and Elliott Maltby about their inability to access open space on public housing property they called home. The young residents shared stories of police requiring grandmas with their grandkids to go inside on hot summer evenings and of people being cited for loitering for hanging out in a building lobby, a violation of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) rules. These conversations took place in the context of the planning process for lowlands, a community-based plan to simultaneously improve public space on NYCHA properties and create green infrastructure and stormwater management solutions in the wake of Superstorm Sandy.



Collage of basketball water plaza, showing improved recreation spaces in public housing campuses that also manage stormwater. Credit: lowlands team/thread collective

From Knowledge Exchange to Concept Strategies

Building on Nandan's pre-existing relationship with Red Hook Initiative, she, Maltby, and GCPE students Christopher Rice and Acacia Dupierre collaborated with the group's Social Justice Fellows, a program where cohorts of youth from NYCHA's Red Hook Houses investigate different societal topics of relevance to them each summer. Through walking tours and design charrettes, the non-extractive knowledge exchange that occurred was mutually beneficial: the Pratt team gained insight about the fellows' on-the-ground realities with public space, and the fellows learned about a broader political and climate resiliency framework for considering how to improve public space. The concept strategies they included in the plan ranged from "fast hacks" such

as tree maintenance to more ambitious interventions like re-activating existing recreational facilities that are unusable due to disrepair. More broadly, lowlands made a case for reclaiming NYCHA campuses as true public open space. This not only benefits NYCHA residents but delivers ecological benefits to the communities that surround them. In fact, the project team calculated how much open space—including urban forests of mature trees—there is on NYCHA property and found that it’s the same amount of space as Central Park, making it another “lung” of New York City.

lowlands Realized

In examining large-scale stormwater capture in relation to urban place-making, lowlands was ahead of its time, predating the current crop of resiliency redesign projects taking place across the city. Twelve years after Sandy, there are five NYCHA campuses doing cloudburst management, a design concept that lowlands explored and that employs a combination of methods to absorb, store, and transfer stormwater to minimize flooding during significant rain events. Its impacts have also been felt closer to home: one of the plan’s key local outgrowths was Nandan and Matby’s work with Green City Force, an organization that trains young leaders from low-income housing communities to power a green and inclusive economy, through service. They built the first urban farm on public housing property in Red Hook, which is now run by Red Hook Initiative, and the food grown there is free of charge to the community. This example of urban agriculture serves as a shining

reminder of the social and environmental goods that come from reclaiming NYCHA land as open, productive space.

Multigenerational Active Streets: Jackson Heights (2021–2022)

Community partners:

Street Lab, 34th Avenue Open Streets Coalition

Project Team:

Hannah Berkin-Harper, Adjunct Associate Professor, Industrial Design + Anushritha Yernool Sunil, MS Industrial Design '22



People of all ages enjoying a carless 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens. Photo courtesy of the 34th Avenue Open Streets Coalition.

Open Streets

After COVID, when indoor gatherings were no longer possible, New York City’s outdoor open spaces took on even greater significance. The new reality spurred the creation of the city’s Open Streets program, closing off stretches of road to cars to make space for people to sit, stroll, and more safely socialize during the pre-vaccine phase of the pandemic. While these new open spaces were a lifeline to many, little attention was being paid to the design of temporary amenities to enhance people’s experiences. To begin addressing this gap, in the spring of 2020, Hannah Berkin-Harper, adjunct associate professor of industrial design, designed a no-touch obstacle course to create an active, safe offering for kids. She did this in collaboration with Street Lab, a nonprofit that creates and shares programs for public space across the city, prioritizing low-income and underserved locations, and always by request from community groups and city agencies.

Expanding the User Demographic

The children’s play kit that Berkin-Harper and Street Lab created was deployed at Open Streets sites across the city, including on 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights. However, the local group managing that open street, the 34th Avenue Open Streets Coalition, soon realized that residents of all ages, particularly seniors, needed active design solutions for optimal enjoyment of the space. The Coalition also knew any type of street furniture that was more than just a folding chair had to be made of durable materials and able to be rapidly set up and taken down since installations are not allowed on open streets. To help them meet this need, Berkin-Harper proposed a Taconic

Fellowship project with the goal of creating a street furniture prototype to promote multigenerational physical and social activity on the open street. While the 34th Avenue site would be the pilot and the focus, as with other Street Lab projects, it could then be deployed citywide.

From Participatory Design to Prototype

Berkin-Harper and Anushritha Sunil, a graduate industrial design student, spent the first half of the fellowship researching and having informal conversations with residents of all ages to learn more about how they use the open street. At their first workshop, a group of seniors expressed skepticism about the Open Street program. The facilitators addressed this by breaking down the co-design process and explaining how it would incorporate their concerns and make the design outcome more usable and enjoyable for them. From their interactions, the Pratt team came away with critical insights about e-bike traffic, the importance of visibility in placemaking, and the fact that the typical folding chairs that the city places along open streets are not supportive enough for many seniors.

The second of the two workshops involved asking participants targeted questions about specific interventions, including seating, multifunctional design, activities, shade, and placemaking. Representatives from a local public elementary school were also there and gave insight about how the design of dynamic objects for the open street could also benefit kids. After more conversations with people they encountered on 34th Avenue and digital surveying, Berkin-Harper synthesized all of the community input and designed and built a prototype for what

came to be called “One Big Bench,” a modular, scalable seating solution. Two years later, as the pandemic-inspired Open Streets program lives on, it is now part of a line of street furniture—including “One Big Table”—that Street Lab deploys to sites across the city from South Jamaica, Queens, to Fordham in the Bronx.

Mujeres Atrevidas / Bold Women (2022–2023)

Community partner:

Worker’s Justice Project

Project Team:

Cynthia Tobar, Visiting Assistant Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

The early days of the COVID pandemic served as a poignant reminder of the critical yet undervalued role that low-wage service workers in sectors such as food delivery play in our economic system. The Worker’s Justice Project (WJP)—a Brooklyn-based nonprofit that empowers low-wage immigrant workers to gain a voice in the workplace through education, organizing, and leadership development—was able to leverage the moment as it mobilized political awareness around labor issues and workplace inequities that these workers face. Their on-the-ground engagement with low-wage workers inspired Cynthia Tobar, professor of social science and cultural studies and community storyteller, to examine a particular subset of these laborers: largely undocumented Latinas dealing with intersectional inequities of gender and labor amidst the growth in app-based technologies.

Co-creation with the Worker’s Justice Project

One day in the spring of 2021, Tobar happened upon the office of WJP, knocked on the door, and thus kicked off a monthslong process of relationship-building with the organization’s staff and delivery workers and domestic workers. That day, she happened to have a zine about mutual aid work that she had previously created to connect food insecurity to housing insecurity; she credits this as her “ticket” in the door to WJP since it demonstrated her background in community storytelling around issues of equity. She proceeded to have many conversations with the workers about their daily lives and struggles and how they were trying to overcome them. Their dialogue also extended into the question of who sets the narrative and how they could play



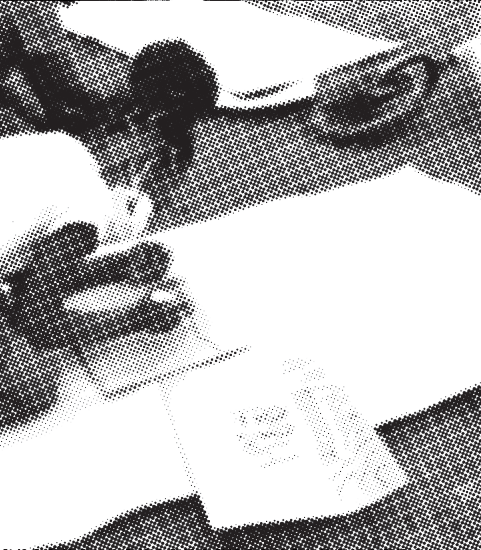
Deliveristas at a vigil for a colleague who was killed on the job. Photo courtesy of Cynthia Tobar.

an active part in shaping and presenting their own stories. When Tobar proposed co-creating a bilingual, documentary film depicting how they were impacted by the pandemic, including their fight for labor rights through their involvement with the Worker’s Justice Project, she assured them that she was in it for the long haul and that the oral history project would not just be about the deliverables but the process. Once they were comfortable and trusted her, they were eager to tell their stories, a contrast to historically being silenced. The women were not limited to any therapeutic value they might have derived from their involvement in the film; Taconic Fellowship funding allowed them to be financially compensated for their time.

The Struggle Continues

The fruit of this collaboration was *Mujeres Atrevidas (Bold Women)*, focusing on the individual journeys of four female workers who are worker-center activist leaders. Weaving together interviews and video footage of their lives and political events, the film depicts their legacy and the enduring power of their resilience. Since its release, as a result of ongoing organizing by WJP, a victory was secured: in April 2024, new legislation passed that increases NYC’s minimum pay rate for app-based restaurant delivery workers to at least \$19.56 per hour before tips. However, the struggle is not over, and WJP continues to do important work. Tobar is excited to continue collaborating with them to tell the ongoing story of advancing worker justice. She is currently fundraising to make an hour-long documentary that will also include female construction workers and pushes the message that labor in action can empower and counter the victim narrative

that injustices only happen “to” people. The goal is to show the general public the importance of supporting the mission of fair treatment in the workplace, secure and livable wages, and uncompromised worker safety.





Index of all Taconic Projects to Date



Sheepshead Bay Resiliency Project

Research project on building codes, zoning, FEMA regulations, the local sewage system and associated environmental health hazards, and possible alternatives to inform the creation of a homeowner’s pamphlet on how Sheepshead Bay residents could rebuild for flood resilience in a post-Sandy world.

Community partner:

Sheepshead Bay Courts Homeowners

Staff/Faculty:

Deborah Gans, Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design

Students:

Ian Carr, Sean Gold, and Sarena Rabinowitz, Architecture; Roz Palmer, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Sustainability/resiliency

Location:

Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn

Opposite: *The Green Stitch: Knitting Communities Together One Garden at a Time* (2021–2022). Architecture students Ayesha Agha, Sokaina Asar, Catherine Chattergoon, Jared Rice, Michelle Singer, and Jubin Titus + Alexandra Barker, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design and Jerrod Delaine, Visiting Assistant Professor, Real Estate Practice

TRUE Project (Trans Urban Education Project)

Creation and delivery of an after-school program curriculum that combined urban studies with social and economic justice assignments that encouraged middle and high school students to understand that another world is possible and that it is their right and obligation as citizens to build that world.

Community partners:

Horizons Leadership Project

Staff/Faculty:

Sasha Sumner, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Film/Video; Jim Costanzo, Adjunct Associate Professor, Photography

Students:

Amir Mills, Communications Design; Charlie Cole, Film/Video; Whitney Ramage, Fine Arts; Nicole Capobianco, Photography

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Brooklyn

Faculty titles are current, not necessarily the title they had during the time of the project.

*Projects marked with an asterisk were initiated and led by students.

Reclaim Works: Community Based Art and Design Education

Project with four local middle schools to reimagine the underutilized and relatively dangerous and unwelcoming space underneath the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway in Fort Greene by introducing the students to art and design strategies that would support their envisioned improvement projects.

Community partner:

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Staff/Faculty:

Erica Schroeder, Staff Member,
Graduate Architecture and Urban
Design

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

Coney Island Ferry Visioning Project*

Community-based planning process to design and implement a ferry landing and park on the south shore of Coney Island Creek.

Community partner:

Coney Island Generation Gap, Friends
of Kaiser Park

Staff/Faculty:

Beth Bingham, Adjunct Associate
Professor, GCPE; Stuart Pertz,
Professor, GCPE

Student:

Inna Guzenfeld, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Community-based planning/
development

Location:

Coney Island, Brooklyn

Graphic Design for Gowanus Public Planning Process

Project in support of a participatory planning process for the future of Brooklyn’s Gowanus neighborhood, including a visual brand and tools for the initiative and the design and maintenance of an interactive website for local stakeholders to track progress and weigh in on planning issues.

Community partner:

Office of Councilmember Brad Lander

Staff/Faculty:

David Frisco, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Communications Design¹

Student:

Allen Spector, Communications Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Community-based planning/development

Location:

Gowanus, Brooklyn

Raw Fiction

Four young Brooklynites participated in workshops to produce a series of original written work that grappled with various themes related to community, socioeconomic equity, and self-development.

Community partners:

Hetrick-Martin Institute, Make the Road New York, FUREE

Staff/Faculty:

Christian Hawkey, Professor, Writing

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling, Workshops

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Brooklyn

¹ David Frisco is currently executive director of Pratt Creative Services.

2014–2015

Furniture Partitions for Women for Afghan Women’s Community Center

Design-build project for a community center serving immigrant women that included a series of movable partitions that dampen sound and contain fold-out tables and seats.

Community partner:

Women for Afghan Women

Staff/Faculty:

John Heida, Visiting Professor,
Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Immigration

Location:

Fresh Meadows, Queens

2014–2015

Open Sewer Atlas NYC

Creation of a map of the full sewer system within the Newtown Creek, Tallman Island, Hunts Point, Jamaica Bay, and Red Hook water pollution control plan sewersheds in order to produce an extensive visualization of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) problem areas and their contributing factors.

Community partner:

Stormwater Infrastructure Matters
(SWIM) Coalition

Staff/Faculty:

Josh Eichen, Staff Member, Pratt
Center for Community Development

Student:

Korin Tangtrakul, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Sustainability/resiliency

Location:

Brooklyn and Queens waterfront

Suspending Injustice: Alternatives to Zero Tolerance

Participatory research initiative focusing on the proliferation of zero tolerance and school discipline/suspension policies as they are experienced by students.

Community partner:

Make the Road New York

Staff/Faculty:

Caitlin Cahill, Associate Professor,
Social Science and Cultural Studies

Students:

Tania Lili Santamaria and Alejandro
Torres, Communications Design;
Morgen Bromwell and Candice
Chantalou, Critical and Visual Studies

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Incarceration

Location:

Brooklyn and Queens

Infrastructure Improvements for Hattie Carthan Herban Farm

This project engaged a community garden's members in hands-on, minds-on activities by making tangible improvements via four small infrastructure projects: retaining walls for an herb garden, a solar water fountain, a wooden platform for a pagoda, and an enclosure for an outhouse.

Community partner:

Hattie Carthan Herban Farm

Staff/Faculty:

Kelly Horrigan, Adjunct Associate
Professor, Fashion Design

Students:

Taylor Engel, Communications Design;
Claire McKinney, Fashion Design;
Georges Ekwensi and Kate Selden,
GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Infrastructure improvements for Hattie
Carthan Herban Farm

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2014–2015

lowlands

Collaboration with a Red Hook-based social justice organization to explore and define a community-based green infrastructure plan as a vehicle for a more economically and ecologically resilient public housing population. Youth engagement was a key component of the plan.

Community partner:

Red Hook Initiative

Staff/Faculty:

Elliott Maltby, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Students:

Christopher Rice and Acacia Dupierre, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Red Hook, Brooklyn

2014–2015

Facilitating Food Waste Recycling and Reuse in Clinton Hill and Fort Greene

Design of a food waste container for use by food-related businesses on Myrtle Avenue in Fort Greene that included a set of visual communication tools to serve as a public/educational campaign about the importance of recycling food waste.

Community partner:

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Staff/Faculty:

Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Student:

Seungmin (Ellen) Oh, Industrial Design

Type of community engagement:

Interviews

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

Reactivating Public Space Through Design

Creation of a prototype of an artistic installation for the Putnam Triangle in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, to attract attention to the space and create a visual language to create aesthetic/design cohesion between the various public spaces along Fulton Street.

Community partner:

FAB Alliance

Staff/Faculty:

Mark Parsons, Director of Production Technologies

Student:

Danica Selem, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

Grey to Green (G2G)

Green infrastructure project that addressed combined sewer overflow into Newtown Creek and produced a green infrastructure systems catalog and a list of intervention sites; included educational workshops to engage the local community around issues of stormwater management.

Community partner:

Newtown Creek Alliance

Staff/Faculty:

Ira Stern, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Josh Eichen, Staff Member, Pratt Center for Community Development

Student:

Meera Vaidya, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Sustainability/resiliency

Location:

North Brooklyn

Sustainability Indicators for Greenest Block in Brooklyn*

Development of a set of sustainability indicators to evaluate the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest by providing greater understanding of its long-term and short-term impacts on sustainability, social architecture, climate change preparedness, and resiliency.

Community partner:

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

Staff/Faculty:

Ayse Yonder, Adjunct Professor, GCPE;
Ira Stern, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Student:

Michelle Gluck, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Sustainability/resiliency

Location:

Brooklyn

Listening Bench

Through a series of storytelling workshops and the making of miniature seats, chairs, and benches, this project worked with residents of a supportive housing complex for low-income people with health challenges to design an interactive bench with the capacity to play recorded fragments of the life stories of some of the residents.

Community partner:

Gibb Mansion

Staff/Faculty:

Theodora Skipitares, Visiting Professor, Art and Design Education

Students:

Theodore Atuluku and Emma Miller, Industrial Design

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Personal and neighborhood history

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2015–2016

Composting Youth Participation and Education*

Youth development and sustainability project that included educational workshops on urban ecology, community gardening, composting, and design for a compost bin.

Community partners:

200 Lexington Ave Block Association (Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn), Clifton Place Block Association Community Garden

Staff/Faculty:

Mark Parsons, Director of Production Technologies

Student:

Jennifer Arizala, Agathe Ceccaldi, and Emma Weiss, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2015–2016

Photo Narratives for Change

Participatory research project that engaged low-income Bronx Community College students in documenting their communities through photography and narrative.

Community partner:

Bronx Community College/Writing Across the Curriculum Program

Staff/Faculty:

Svetlana Jović, Visiting Lecturer, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Student:

Andrew Jarman, Photography

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

South Bronx

2016–2017

Equity in Innovation Partnership*

Research and design of a program to build partnerships between Pratt’s urban planning, design and technology programs and New York City public schools to further equity and inclusion in urban planning and other innovation fields.

Community partner:

Pratt Center for Art, Design and Community Engagement K–12

Staff/Faculty:

Aileen Wilson, Chair of Art and Design Education

Student:

Kate Selden, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Equitable economic/workforce development

Location:

Citywide

2016–2017

Reducing Food Insecurity in Washington Heights – Providing Emergency Food Through a Mobile Pantry

A process flow diagram and value chain analysis were developed to support the creation of a mobile food pantry for an anti-hunger organization; this included researching the organization’s operations, identifying barriers and challenges to food distribution, and defining the mobile pantry’s operations (e.g., screening, pantry assistance, social services).

Community partner:

West Side Campaign Against Hunger

Staff/Faculty:

Denise Tahara, Adjunct Associate Professor, Creative Enterprise Leadership; Edwin Kuo, Visiting Instructor, Design Management

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

Washington Heights, Manhattan

Chipping Away at Poverty Through Community Design: A Collaborative Program for Composting in Park Slope*

This project aimed to close the loop between a Brooklyn food coop, a soup kitchen, and a nearby community garden through designing a collection bin for compost and establishing a self-sustaining program that encourages the reduction of food.

Community partner:

Community Help in Park Slope (CHiPS)

Staff/Faculty:

Jennifer E. Telesca, Assistant Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Student:

Megan Lighty, Industrial Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

Park Slope, Brooklyn

Concrete Waves

Green infrastructure research project focused on the development of a skate park that doubles as a storm water management system and creates an active space for youth in Red Hook.

Community partner:

Red Hook Initiative

Staff/Faculty:

Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Student:

Levi Johnsen, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Red Hook, Brooklyn

2016–2017

Bronx Outreach for Brownfield Redevelopment*

Facilitation of a community outreach and visioning process in support of a brownfield redevelopment plan to ensure that any new development or proposed uses for available parcels are in line with the community needs.

Community partner:

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

Staff/Faculty:

Jaime Stein, Associate Professor,
GCPE

Student:

Adriana Beltrani, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Community-based planning/
development

Location:

South Bronx

2016–2017

Our City, Our Stories / Nuestra Ciudad, Nuestros Recuerdos

Participatory community archive project to support Bushwick residents in the collective documentation of their own social histories, including mapping longtime community members' stories in relation to urban policy.

Community partner:

Make the Road New York

Staff/Faculty:

Cynthia Tobar, Visiting Assistant Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies; Chris Neville, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE; Caitlin Cahill, Associate Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research, storytelling

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Bushwick, Brooklyn

2017-2018

Stories in Clay

A clay-making and storytelling workshop series was delivered to residents of Gibb Mansion, a service-enriched residence developed for low-income community residents with chronic illness and/or in need of mental health support.

Community partner:

Gibb Mansion, IMPACCT Brooklyn

Staff/Faculty:

Theodora Skipitares, Visiting Professor, Art and Design Education

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Personal and neighborhood history

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2017-2018

Garden of Gems

Jewelry-making workshops for survivors of domestic violence and/or human trafficking were held; through this therapeutic arts-based activity, participants were able to engage and process their trauma while developing a creative outlet.

Community partner:

Garden of Hope

Staff/Faculty:

Dina Schapiro, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Creative Arts Therapy

Student:

Crystal Chen, Creative Arts Therapy

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Gender-based violence

Location:

Flushing, Queens

2017–2018

A Strategic Plan for Vernon Avenue / Productive Collisions

Strategic planning, design, and development of a pop-up structure for a design-oriented social enterprise focused on disconnected youth in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

Community partner:

Vernon Avenue Project

Staff/Faculty:

Jack Travis, Adjunct Professor, Interior Design; Jeffrey Chen, Visiting Assistant Professor, Interior Design; Latoya Kamdang, Adjunct Professor, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2017–2018

Truthworker Theater Trilogy

This theatrical piece depicts the prison industrial complex through the lens of a dozen youth directly impacted by mass incarceration.

Community partner:

Truthworker Theatre Company

Staff/Faculty:

Tracie Morris, Coordinator,
Performance and Performance Studies

Student:

Donnay Edmund, Performance Studies

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Incarceration

Location:

Brooklyn

Landmark Pioneers in Addressing Community and Secondary Displacement in the EIS Process

This project engaged with tenants on the Lower East Side to help ensure that their priorities and concerns were reflected in the environmental impact review study for the Two Bridges development proposal to build two residential towers.

Community partner:

Tenants United Fighting For the Lower East Side (TUFF-LES)

Staff/Faculty:

Eve Baron, Chair, GCPE; Eva Hanhardt, Adjunct Assistant Professor, GCPE; Mercedes Narciso, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Ayse Yonder, Adjunct Professor, GCPE; Jaime Stein, Associate Professor, GCPE

Students:

Jim Shelton, Sheena Kang, Pavithra Sriram, and Renae Widdison, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Lower East Side, Manhattan

Designating Community Gardens as Critical Environmental Areas

Community-based research project that explored the potential for increasing regulatory protections for community gardens by using ecological metrics to quantify the environmental benefits they deliver.

Community partner:

We Stay/Nos Quedamos Committee

Staff/Faculty:

Ray Figueroa, Visiting Instructor, GCPE

Student:

Samuel Pressman, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Interviews

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Citywide

2017–2018

MARP Energy Opportunities Project

This project created and delivered a road map for pursuing cooperative energy purchasing as a means for small businesses to remain competitive and thrive along Myrtle Avenue’s commercial corridor.

Community partner:

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Staff/Faculty:

Jenifer Becker, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Student:

Michael Olson, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Surveys

Topic category:

Equitable economic/workforce development

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

2017–2018

A Landfill for New York*

The Landfill Project aims to bring local residents together with a diverse group of experts and artists to understand and imagine the potential of the Edgemere site, a former municipal dump in the Rockaways, Queens.

Community partner:

Rockaway Waterfront Alliance

Staff/Faculty:

Elliot Maltby, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Simon Kates, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Student:

Sonya Gimon, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Rockaways, Queens

2018–2019

Climate Resilience Leadership Project

Pilot project with a group of high school students and a public housing tenants association in East Harlem to create an emergency preparedness guidebook for public housing residents and provide information about climate change risks and resources to make the community more resilient.

Community partner:

DREAM Charter School and the Washington Houses Tenants Association

Staff/Faculty:

Michael Haggerty, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Student:

Samuel Pressman, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

East Harlem, Manhattan

2018–2019

As Told: Myrtle Ave Seniors Oral History Project

The stories of senior citizens from Clinton Hill and Fort Greene were recorded and published to honor those who have lived through the social and economic transformations of these neighborhoods.

Community partner:

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Staff/Faculty:

Luke Denegan, Visiting Instructor, Office of the Provost; Maria G. Baker, Visiting Instructor, Office of the Provost

Students:

Samuel Herrera, Photography; Aarushi Agni, Writing

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Personal and neighborhood history

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

Community Photo Album

Public exhibition to heighten awareness of the historic significance of neighborhood “places” and engender community involvement by connecting people to Sara Roosevelt Park and its public buildings as a shared and relevant place beyond recreational activities.

Community partners:

Sara Roosevelt Park Coalition,
Green Map System, University
Settlement, FABnyc

Staff/Faculty:

Keena Suh, Professor, Interior Design;
Karyn Zieve, Adjunct Assistant
Professor, History of Art and Design

Student:

Seokyoung Jung, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Lower East Side, Manhattan

League Education and Treatment Center

Programming that incorporates art therapy and concepts from eco-psychology—a practice that is increasingly known as environmental art therapy—was developed and delivered to the young people at a school that serves children and adolescents with significant and frequently severe developmental and psychological disabilities.

Community partner:

League Education and
Treatment Center

Staff/Faculty:

Jean Davis, Professor, Creative Arts
Therapy

Student:

Ashley Breton, Allyson Parrish, and
Lindsey Gamble, Creative Arts Therapy

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Citywide

2018–2019

Food Buying Club – East New York Farms

Development of a community-driven food buying club that provides year-round access to affordable, fresh food. The project encompasses the exploration of location options and location partners for regular deliveries, the co-creation of the logistics and the design of the communication system among food buying club members.

Community partner:

East New York Farms

Staff/Faculty:

Pirco Wolfframm, Adjunct Professor,
Communications Design

Students:

Stephanie Høholt-Pajuelo and Ava Wang, Communications Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning, workshops

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

East New York, Brooklyn

2019–2020

The Life of Benjamin Banneker

A Brooklyn high school's drumming band was engaged to tell the story of astronomer and mathematician Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806) through the production of an outdoor parade and a theater piece.

Community partner:

Benjamin Banneker Academy
for Community Development

Staff/Faculty:

Theodora Skipitares, Visiting Professor,
Art and Design Education

Students:

DeAndra Craigman,
Art and Design Education

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Personal and neighborhood history

Location:

Brooklyn

2019–2020

Future Cities

The project engaged recent graduates, young women of color, from the Octavia Project’s Summer Institute to explore urban planning issues they encounter in their everyday lives, and co-create an urban planning curriculum for young people that can be replicated and disseminated across the city.

Community partner:

Octavia Project

Staff/Faculty:

Sydney Cespedes, Staff Member, Pratt Center for Community Development

Student:

Kate Selden, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Brooklyn

2019–2020

Emancipatory Urban Futures

Artistic, design, and research partnership aimed at imagining a more inclusive and just city for the next generation. Based on community workshops and discussions, the project created an archive of artifacts, testimonials, scholarship, and resources for community groups concerned about gentrification’s contribution to the displacement and dispossession of BIPOC, working class communities across New York City.

Community partner:

Iyapo Repository

Staff/Faculty:

Caitlin Cahill, Associate Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Brooklyn

2019-2020

(Dis)Placed in Sunset Park

Interactive multimedia story-based and mapping project with short videos of Chinese, Latina, and other (im)migrants, workers, and residents in Brooklyn's diverse Sunset Park neighborhood. The project included community screenings, placekeeping walks, and exhibitions that highlighted the neighborhood's anti-displacement organizing efforts and ways for people to get involved.

Community partners:

Protect 8th Avenue Coalition, Sunset Park for a Liberated Future, and UPROSE

Staff/Faculty:

Betty Yu, Adjunct Instructor, Social Science and Cultural Studies; Caitlin Cahill, Associate Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Sunset Park, Brooklyn

2019-2020

Fear as Fuel

This project created a series of art-making workshops around the theme of fear for young men involved with the justice system.

Community partner:

Recess Art

Staff/Faculty:

Shaun Leonardo, Fine Arts
(Visiting Fellow, School of Art)

Student:

Hannah Celli, Creative Arts Therapy

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Incarceration

Location:

Brooklyn

2019–2020

North Brooklyn Neighbors

Development of a community-based interactive map of toxic “hot spots” in Greenpoint and Williamsburg that aims to connect community members to information about environmental remediation projects so that they can organize and work to mitigate against future environmental and health hazards. The map also provides a platform where community members can flag potential environmental hazards.

Community partner:

North Brooklyn Neighbors

Staff/Faculty:

Jessie Braden, Director, SAVI

Students:

Haley Balcanoff, Zachary Walker, and Anna Yie, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Workshop

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

North Brooklyn

2019–2020

Environmental Justice for Vendors by Vendors

With the goal of transforming New York’s food carts to a green and resilient industry, this project researched and collected information from street vendors about energy use, air quality, food waste and “to go” packaging, and composting.

Community partner:

Street Vendor Project

Staff/Faculty:

Julie Torres Moskovitz, Visiting Assistant Professor, Interior Design

Students:

Ashkika Amaranth, Shilpa Kalaichelvan, Priyanka Unadkat, and Tara Vellara, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Citywide

2019–2020

Migration Stories in Multiple Media

A series of workshops were held with members of immigrant communities and the Brooklyn Public Library to reflect on, write, and illustrate personal experiences and ideas of immigration, community, and personal and public space.

Community partner:

Brooklyn Public Library
(Central Branch)

Staff/Faculty:

Arlene Keizer, Professor, Humanities and Media Studies; Peter Macapia, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Storytelling, workshops

Topic category:

Immigration

Location:

Brooklyn

2020–2021

Piloting Innovative Community Engagement Tools for Two Bridges

This project developed a set of interactive digital tools to democratize neighborhood planning in Chinatown by empowering citizens to visualize and shape complex urban projects, analyze trade-offs in real-time, and make persuasive data-backed choices that further resilience, preservation, and urban justice.

Community partner:

Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)

Staff/Faculty:

Meta Brunzema, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design

Students:

Justin Heu and Khue Trinh,
Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Chinatown, Manhattan

2020–2021

Blue City Blueblocks Garden

Design-build project for full-scale, semi-submersible floating gardens that improve air and water quality while increasing habitat for waterfowl and marine life on the Red Hook, Brooklyn waterfront.

Community partner:

RETI Center

Staff/Faculty:

Elliott Maltby, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Gita Nandan, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Red Hook, Brooklyn

2020–2021

Community Response

Oral history processes and digital storytelling were employed to further understand the lived experiences of Latinx, immigrant youth at a bilingual high school in Manhattan. They created media art to respond to social injustices by addressing community, history, and socio-economic issues.

Community partner:

Gregorio Luperon High School

Staff/Faculty:

Chloe Smolarski, Visiting Instructor, Digital Arts and Animation

Student:

Alessandra Woodman Pinto, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Oral history, storytelling

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Manhattan

2020–2021

Owning Our Narrative: From Victims to Victors

By documenting their stories of transformation and resilience through filmmaking, survivors explored personal, structural, and systemic challenges in combating gender-based violence.

Community partner:

Sanctuary for Families

Staff/Faculty:

Renata Strashnaya,
Adjunct Assistant Professor,
Social Science and Cultural Studies

Students:

Lisa Jennison and Maribel Marmolejo,
Film/Video

Type of community engagement:

Filmmaking

Topic category:

Gender-based violence

Location:

Citywide

2020–2021

Grassroots Women's Contribution to Community Development and Climate Justice

This project established a new teaching tool for community development education by uniting women organizers across borders and creating a shared space for participants to reflect on their common local challenges and new global opportunities for collaboration.

Community partner:

Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES),
Huairou Commission

Staff/Faculty:

Ayse Yonder, Adjunct Professor,
GCPE; Juan Camilo Osorio, Associate
Professor, GCPE; Mercedes Narciso,
Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE

Students:

Brit Byrd and Yuri Chang, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Community-based planning/
development

Location:

Citywide

2020–2021

Minecraft × Youth Engagement

Demonstration of how a 3-D build-and-play video game can capture the interest of youth in urban decision-making by applying it to New York City’s participatory budgeting process to operationalize funded capital projects.

Community partner:

Coro New York Leadership Center

Staff/Faculty:

Eve Baron, Chair, GCPE; Can Sucuoglu, Visiting Assistant Professor, Continuing and Professional Studies

Student:

Rachel Ko, Digital Arts and Animation

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Citywide

2020–2021

Connecting to the Archive of Weeksville: Anti-gentrification Tactics in Central Brooklyn

Oral history and documentation project to support the Weeksville Heritage Center’s efforts to preserve and add to their community development archive.

Community partner:

Weeksville Heritage Center

Staff/Faculty:

Jeffrey Hogrefe, Professor, Humanities and Media Studies; Scott Ruff, Adjunct Associate Professor, Undergraduate Architecture

Students:

Sadie Hope-Gund, School of Information; Jared Rice and Joseph Shiveley, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Oral history

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change

Location:

Weeksville, Brooklyn

2021–2022

The Green Stitch: Knitting Communities Together One Garden at a Time*

Restoration project for the neglected John the Baptist Community Garden in Bedford-Stuyvesant that engaged youth from the Green Guerilla's youth initiative to help raise public awareness of the garden through a series of workshops, surveys, and documentation.

Community partner:

Green Guerillas

Staff/Faculty:

Alexandra Barker, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design; Jerrod Delaine, Visiting Assistant Professor, Real Estate Practice

Students:

Ayesha Agha, Sokaina Asar, Catherine Chattergoon, Jared Rice, Michelle Singer, and Jubin Titus, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2021–2022

All Weather Garden Pavilions

Collaborative project with residents of a transitional housing shelter to design outdoor learning environments for women and their children, allowing for the expansion of art programs and use of outdoor space.

Community partner:

Concourse House

Staff/Faculty:

Alexandra Barker, Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design; Paul Laroque, Visiting Assistant Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design

Students:

Sara Brandt and Ivan Man Hin Yan, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Workshops

Topic category:

Gender-based violence

Location:

Kingsbridge Heights, Bronx

2021–2022

Reclaiming the Commons Through Play

Participatory design project to help re-envision underutilized public spaces on three NYCHA campuses in East Harlem and create much-needed intergenerational space for healing and gathering with and for residents in the context of a post-pandemic city beset by segregation, disinvestment, and violence.

Community partner:

Center for Court Innovation

Staff/Faculty:

Deborah Gans, Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design; David Burney, Associate Professor, GCPE; Caitlin Cahill, Associate Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies; Jerrod Delaine, Visiting Assistant Professor, Real Estate Practice

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

East Harlem, Manhattan

2021–2022

Multigenerational Active Streets: Jackson Heights

Creation of street furniture prototypes to help promote multigenerational physical and social activity in Jackson Heights, Queens.

Community partner:

Street Lab, 34th Avenue Open Streets Coalition

Staff/Faculty:

Hannah Berkin-Harper, Adjunct Associate Professor, Industrial Design

Student:

Anushritha Yernool Sunil, Industrial Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Jackson Heights, Queens

2021–2022

Enhancing Access to Healthy Food and Empowering Street Vendors through Participatory Design

This project engaged with street vendors to design a prototype for a Department of Health-compliant affordable fruit selling cart and to prepare a policy document outlining the main burdens of the current regulation of such carts and possible amendments to it.

Community partner:

Street Vendor Project

Staff/Faculty:

Ryan Thomas Devlin, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE; Ane Gonzalez Lara, Assistant Professor, Undergraduate Architecture

Students:

Shanaz Khan, GCPE and Eesha Jain, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

Citywide

2022–2023

Mujeres Atrevidas (Bold Women)

Bilingual documentary film project depicting how female delivery workers, construction workers, and day laborers have been impacted by the pandemic and their fight for labor rights through their involvement with the Worker's Justice Project.

Community partner:

Worker's Justice Project

Staff/Faculty:

Cynthia Tobar, Visiting Assistant Professor, Social Science and Cultural Studies

Students:

Sara Brandt and Ivan Man Hin Yan, Architecture

Type of community engagement:

Interviews

Topic category:

Equitable economic/workforce development

Location:

Central Brooklyn

2022-2023

Food Futures Food Justice Lab

Interior design students designed and beta-tested ideas for a new mutual aid program that seeks to address the gap between food waste and food insecurity by producing alternative solutions for healthy food access beyond the community fridge model.

Community partner:

Collective Food Works

Staff/Faculty:

Ashely Kuo, Visiting Assistant Professor, Interior Design;
Andrea Chiney, Visiting Assistant Professor, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Interactive exhibit

Topic category:

Food access/food waste

Location:

Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

2022-2023

The Hole

Participatory research project that engaged residents of East New York's "The Hole" neighborhood to tell their stories and support them in envisioning a safer and healthier future.

Documenting the area's ecological and cultural history and connecting the current community to this heritage through interpretation and sustainability practices is part of planning work community leaders are undertaking.

Community partner:

East New York Community Land Trust

Staff/Faculty:

Vicki Weiner, Adjunct Associate Professor, GCPE; Jenna Dublin-Boc, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Students:

Olivia Holland and Radhya Kareem, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

East New York, Brooklyn

2022-2023

Long Memories of Material Injustices

Public history project that engaged Central Brooklyn elders living in public housing to share their memories and capture the accumulated history of discriminatory policies and practices in public transportation that are rooted in structural racism.

Community partner:
7Cinema

Staff/Faculty:
Keena Suh, Professor, Interior Design;
Heather Lewis, Professor, Art and Design Education

Type of community engagement:
Oral history

Topic category:
Community-based planning/
development

Location:
Central Brooklyn

2022-2023

Pratt Phenology Trail

A project to research, assess, and initiate a trail network emanating from the Pratt campus throughout the neighborhood and nearby natural areas. The multipurpose trail network will interpret the urban and natural landscape and community.

Community partner:
Fort Greene Park Conservancy,
Brooklyn Greenway Initiative

Staff/Faculty:
Ira Stern, Adjunct Associate Professor,
GCPE

Students:
Aditi Galande, Harrison Nesbitt, Nia Starr, and Bansri Makadiya, GCPE

Type of community engagement:
Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:
Sustainability/resiliency

Location:
Clinton Hill/Fort Greene, Brooklyn

2023–2024

Equitable Access to Art High Schools

This project is an academic partnership with a Brooklyn middle school to address the educational needs for traditionally disenfranchised middle schoolers and their families as they identify, apply for, and advance to high school.

Community partner:

Arts & Letters 305 United

Staff/Faculty:

Aileen Wilson, Chair of Art and Design Education; Katherine Huala, Assistant Professor, Art and Design Education; Tara Kopp, Visiting Assistant Professor, Art and Design Education; Jonell Joshua, Assistant to the Chair, Art and Design Education

Type of community engagement:

Education

Topic category:

Youth education/development

Location:

Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

2023–2024

Hudson Access Project

Creation of a comprehensive water access dataset and interactive map to empower individuals to connect with the Hudson and Harbor Estuary, including an environmental justice analysis, water access points such as street-ends, and water quality and safety resources.

Community partner:

New York–New Jersey Harbor and Estuary Program Public Access Working Group

Staff/Faculty:

Sara Eichner, Visiting Faculty, Pratt Research Accelerators; Sara Hodges, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Environmental/climate justice

Location:

Citywide

Classroom Prototype: A Design-Build Community Engaged Studio

Design-build project with a studio class to create classroom furniture that is mass-customizable and transportable for a STEAM Brooklyn middle school focused on sustainability.

Community partner:

Harbor Middle School

Staff/Faculty:

Deborah Schneiderman, Professor, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Sustainability/resiliency

Location:

Red Hook, Brooklyn

Racial Impact Report Assessment

Research project to examine the implementation of newly required racial equity reports. By taking an early look at how they are (or are not) being used by community boards when reviewing real estate development proposals, the goal of the project is to recommend policies to address any gaps in their use.

Community partner:

Racial Impact Study Coalition

Staff/Faculty:

Eve Baron, Chair, GCPE; Tara Duvivier, Pratt Center for Community Development; John Lauermann, Director, SAVI

Students:

Roman Lombardo, Alex De Rege, and Matt Meyer, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Participatory research

Topic category:

Gentrification and community change, development, public review

Visioning Corona Plaza

This project provided technical assistance to vendors in their efforts to return to Corona Plaza from which they had been cleared out of without warning. This includes design and technical issues for a new vendor market and the production of visualizations to help the vendors communicate the market's future place in the neighborhood.

Community partner:

Asociación Vendedores Ambulantes de Corona Plaza

Staff/Faculty:

Ryan Thomas Devlin, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Equitable economic/workforce development

Location:

Corona, Queens

Co-Designing the Flatbush Community Land Trust

Community-based process with a studio class for envisioning the future of Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood that resulted in a community scrapbook to further dialogue with neighbors and public officials about what is possible within a community land trust.

Community partner:

Brooklyn Level Up (BKLVLUP)

Staff/Faculty:

Ellen Garrett, Visiting Assistant Professor, Graduate Architecture and Urban Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning

Topic category:

Community-based planning/development

Location:

Flatbush, Brooklyn

2023–2024

Riis Beach Is the Peoples' Beach: Envisioning Queer Health in and with Community

Participatory design process to imagine Riis Beach's queer pasts, presents, and futures and to advocate for its designation as a historical landmark.

Community partners:

GLITS, Project Abigail

Staff/Faculty:

Virginia Black, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Interior Design

Type of community engagement:

Co-design/participatory planning, workshops

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

Riis Beach, Queens

2023–2024

Equitable Economic Development through Creative Placemaking

Collaborative community process to create a design for a mural that will honor the history of a vacant train station in the Bronx, activate the site, and stimulate public interest and excitement about its future.

Community partner:

Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice

Staff/Faculty:

Stephen Davies, Visiting Assistant Professor, GCPE

Students:

Yeswanth Loganathan, Interior Design; Penny Lewis, GCPE; Brianna Carlini, Fine Arts

Type of community engagement

Co-design/participatory planning, workshops

Topic category:

Public space

Location:

South Bronx

60 years of

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